



TUALATIN VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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June 3, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 1153

Dear Senate Rules Committee:

I am writing to express my concerns over and opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 1153. The Tualatin Valley Irrigation District (TVID) is located primarily in Washington County. TVID operates and maintains the Tualatin Project, a United States Bureau of Reclamation project. TVID is in a 50-year repayment contract for the construction of the project. We deliver irrigation water to up to 17,000 acres within the Tualatin Basin. Henry Hagg Lake is the primary source of our water supply and we share the allocation of the stored water with our project partners, the City of Hillsboro – Joint Water Commission (JWC) and Clean Water Services (CWS) for municipal and water quality uses respectively.

TVID has a responsibility to protect our water rights. TVID's primary source of revenue is via assessments on those lands which receive irrigation water from the project. As the county continues to grow at an accelerated rate, TVID lands are getting encroached upon, often being overlooked by regional planning efforts for residential and commercial development. TVID must often transfer water rights off these encroached upon lands and move them elsewhere within the district. TVID relies on the water right transfer process to manage and protect its water rights. Currently, the State of Oregon's Water Resources Department (WRD) may not approve a transfer if (a) the transfer were to either enlarge an existing water right, or (b) cause injury to any other existing water right on the system.

SB 1153 would create new standards for evaluating transfers of existing water rights and would require WRD to determine if a transfer would (a) result in the loss of instream habitat for sensitive, threatened, or endangered aquatic species in stream reaches that are not protected by an existing water right, or (b) contribute to water quality impairment in water quality listed streams. TVID believes SB 1153 would further complicate WRD's burdensome transfer review process.

WRD is the state department tasked with water quantity allocation and does not have the authority or expertise to evaluate the impacts of water right transactions on aquatic species or water quality. The new standards proposed in SB 1153 would likely require lengthy, multi-agency review processes. TVID acknowledges WRD's transfer review process already has significant delays, and believes the implementation of SB 1153 would undoubtedly further compound the transfer review process.

From our perspective, SB 1153 appears to be directed towards farms and agricultural producers, while not holding municipalities to the same standard. The proposed amendments to the bill would exempt most municipal water suppliers from these new standards while intentionally excluding irrigation districts and similar entities from this exemption.

TVID asks the Oregon legislature to seek opportunities to increase water right flexibility to ensure irrigation districts, agricultural users, and municipal users can improve operational efficiencies while protecting existing water rights.

Please help us protect our water rights and preserve irrigated agriculture.

TVID asks that you vote against Senate Bill 1153.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bobby Nuvolini', written in a cursive style.

Bobby Nuvolini
District Manager
Tualatin Valley Irrigation District